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Translating as Translanguaging in Additional Language Learning

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Translation Studies has much to offer beyond the boundaries of the training of professional translators. Recently, new paths regarding the role of translation in different fields have been explored. Amongst them, translation is now being studied as a central learning strategy in new approaches to Additional Language Learning (ALL) that draw from studies on bilingualism and on language acquisition in plurilingual and pluricultural communities. The Plurilingual Turn underlines a holistic, connected view of knowledge acquisition that fosters interaction between languages and cultures, contrary to teaching plurilingual/cultural speakers in artificial monolingual/cultural contexts. Notions such as multi-competence (Cook), the interdependence hypothesis (Cummins), translanguaging (García), pedagogically-based code-switching (Corcoll) or translating for other learning contexts (TOLC) (González Davies) are gradually making their way into research and pedagogical practices.

In this paper I will present an ongoing research project (2008-2015) where translation is used, following socio-constructivist and humanistic practices, as an efficient scaffolding strategy to advance both language learning and intercultural communicative competence. In our Integrating Plurilingual Approach (IPA), we mainly seek points of convergence between (language) learning objectives (Bloom, situated learning), (language) learning strategies (Oxford, Macaro, Cohen), intercultural communicative competence (Byram, Coste), and translation competence in translation training (Kelly, González Davies).

Over 500 students and 19 teachers have now collaborated with the study. The following questions have been explored: Can research and good practices in Translation Studies be transferred to learning contexts that involve ALL? Can translation be used as both a skill and a strategy to improve linguistic, interlinguistic and intercultural competence in learning contexts that involve ALL? Can learning material and procedures such as translation tasks and projects be designed to improve linguistic and intercultural competence in learning contexts that involve ALL?

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